



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**

Jacksonville District

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CORPS OF ENGINEERS CONTINUES RELEASE FROM LAKE OKEECHOBEE

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – In response to recent heavy rainfall within a short time period in the vicinity of Lake Okeechobee and the Water Conservation Areas (WCAs), and the subsequent runoff, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will begin a Level 1 pulse release from the lake to the Caloosahatchee River and the St. Lucie Canal on Thursday, June 5, 2003.

Due to the rainfall, Lake Okeechobee releases south have been stopped because the WCAs are now above their respective regulation schedules. In addition, regional water supply demands have ceased, resulting in reduced discharges from the lake.

Pulse releases are designed to mimic nature and provide discharges from the lake to the estuaries via the St. Lucie Canal to the east and the Caloosahatchee River to the west. They attempt to strike a balance between the lake's littoral zone and the estuaries. In the future, the ongoing Everglades restoration, known as CERP, is designed to provide storage for much of this water and minimize these types of releases.

Tuesday's lake level was 14.92 feet, in Zone D of the WSE (Water Supply/Environment) regulation schedule, approximately .58 feet below Zone C.

To prepare for the upcoming wet season WSE allows water managers to respond proactively to the hydrologic conditions. If necessary, pulse releases will continue in an attempt to avoid larger releases that may occur if the lake rises into the next operation zone.

The pulse will continue for 10 days at an average rate of 1600 cubic feet per second (cfs) to the Caloosahatchee River and 730 cfs to the St. Lucie Canal. The pulse release will be made through Structures S-77 and S-80 and will be carefully monitored to evaluate the salinity level.

For further information, please call the Jacksonville District Public Affairs Office at 904-232-2236 or 904-614-4976.

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